

*Of staying the Mind on GOD, and GOD's keep-
ing the Peace of such a Mind.*

A
S E R M O N
PREACH'D IN
S O U T H W A R K
ON THE
D E A T H
O F

Mrs. ELIZABETH HUGHES.

By S. WRIGHT, D.D. *N*

Publish'd at the Request of SEVERAL FRIENDS.

L O N D O N:

Printed for R. HETT, at the *Bible and Crown* in
the *Poultry*. M.DCC.XXXVI.
Price Six-Pence.

279

ISAIAH xxvi. 3.

“ Thou wilt keep him in perfect Peace,
 “ whose Mind is stay’d on thee;
 “ because he trusteth in thee.”

THE great Sovereign of Life and Death having seen fit to remove, out of our World, the *Soul* of a most desirèable and valuable Relation to your dear Pastor; and there being no publick Worship at present in *that Place*, where the Deceased when living statedly attended; it is thought proper to improve her Death in this *Assembly*, by a Discourse on the Words now read. Who knows but it may be so ordered, for the special Benefit of some that statedly attend in this Place? And I would hope that *others*, who are come purely upon this Occasion, are well disposed to gain some Advantage by what they shall now hear.

This Text was much upon the Heart of the good Creature that is gone; who therefore desired it might be preach’d upon, and recommended to others at her Death: And blessed are they who live and die in the believing Application of it as she did.

I will not now stay upon the *Context*, but immediately fix your Thoughts on the Words themselves, by shewing,

I. What it is to have a Mind stay’d on God, according to the Scripture Account of this Matter.

II. The Care which God hath of the Peace of such a Mind. Thou wilt keep him in *Peace, Peace*;

a *Hebrew Phrase* that is well translated *perfect Peace*.

III. The *Foundation* of this Peace, and the *Reason* of God's Care about it to *keep it*. "Because
" he trusteth in thee."

A right Trust in God doth not only, in the very *Exercise of it*, promote the Peace and Serenity of the Mind; but it is a Reason why God himself should be the Guardian and Preserver of that Serenity. And there is no such Thing as *perfect Peace*, Peace inward and outward, without looking to God as the Keeper of it; which must be done, by staying our Minds upon him, as he hath taught and encouraged us to do. Let us therefore consider briefly,

I. What it is to have a *Mind stay'd on God*, according to the Scripture Account of it.

This blessed State is described in the general, by forsaking all lying Vanities and *false Trusts*: And by bringing the Mind to an intire Dependence on the Nature and Perfections, the Providence and Government, the Word and Promises of God. "Blessed is the Man that maketh the Lord his
" Trust, and respecteth not the Proud, nor such as
" turn aside to Lies, *Psal. xl. 4.*" A Mind rescued from Pride and false Dependencies, must be actually brought to commit it self and all its Concerns to God, rather choosing to be *led* by him, than pretending in any thing to *direct* him. There must be a steady referring to the *last Issue* of Things, under all the *Changes* of this Life. And there must be a continual Hope and Expectation of its being well with the Righteous in general, whatever be the Aspect of our own private Affairs, or the State of Things in the World.

1. A Mind stay'd on God must be rescued from all *false Trusts*. Nothing is more vehemently insisted on, than this, throughout the whole Course of Scripture.

It is expressly required, That no Man should trust in *Wickedness*. That is, in any infidel Notions, or practically casting off the Fear and Worship of God. In such Cases, destructive Evils are produced, Men do *not know*, or take Account, from whence they arise; and therefore it is said, *sudden Desolation* cometh upon them. See *Isai.* xlvii. 10, 11. It is a wicked and forbidden Thing to trust in *Oppression*, “Tho’ there be ever so much Wisdom, or Power, or Interest, to bear down others.” *Psal.* lxii. 10.

Another false Trust warned against is, the *Multitude of Riches*, *Psal.* lii. 7. Which are at best, and in the greatest Possession of them, *uncertain Things*. *1 Tim.* vi. 17. They are often retained by the *Owners* thereof to their Hurt. They excite Envy and Hatred many times, instead of procuring Love. They make Men proud and passionate, ungrateful, luxurious and sensual, and thus expose them to the Displeasure of God, as well as to the Envy of their fellow Creatures, to Robberies and Murders.—And when Goods *laid up for many Years* make the Soul think of nothing but taking *its Ease*, then comes the unexpected Summons to die, and give up all.—Therefore all Trust in these *perishing* Enjoyments, is to be renounced for the sake of Trust in God, considered as the *living God*, and as the Giver of *all Things richly to enjoy*, *1 Tim.* vi. 17.

The Scripture also forbids a glorying in *Wisdom*, leaning to a Man’s own *Understanding*, or trusting in his own *Heart*, Spirit, or Courage. See *Jerem.* ix. 23, 24.

Staying the Mind upon human Friendship, and looking for great Things from *Man* and from an *Arm of Flesh*, hath in Scripture a Curse denounced against

against it. *Jerem. xvii. 5.* The *Fear* also of *Men*, is opposed to Trust in God. “ The Fear of Man bringeth a Snare ; but whoso putteth his Trust in the Lord shall be safe.” *Prov. xxix. 25.* See *Isaiab ii. 11, 22.* Where the greatest Abilities are, there are often the unkindest and most ungenerous Hearts. Yea, where the greatest Professions of Respect and Friendship are made too, in some Parts of Life, yet through the Fickleness of Tempers, Change of Circumstances, Forgetfulness of former Obligations, or Prejudices raised and strengthened by some new Friends and Acquaintance, or new Ways of thinking, there is no staying the Mind upon any *human Promises* or Expectations.

2. A Mind delivered from false Trusts must be stay’d on God, by its having a *realizing, practical* Apprehension of the *divine Perfections*. They that know the NAME of God, — duly considering his Wisdom, Power, Goodness, Faithfulness, and all that goes to make up his great Name, and to give a true notion of God, — they will put their Trust in him. There is a great deal of Difference betwixt hearing and talking of the *Attributes* of God, and a constant *living* upon them, and applying our Thoughts to them, under all the Duties and Difficulties of Life. This is implied in staying the Mind on God.

3. Where the Mind is stay’d on God, there must be a firm Persuasion of his *superintending Providence*. Our blessed Saviour hath taught us to eye this in every thing that relates to our Bodies ; the forming of them, the Stature of them, their Food and Raiment, and all that relates to their Life or Death. Our *Souls* and *Spirits* are also his Care, and the Objects of special Favour, and are declared to be of exceeding Worth and Dignity under the Gospel Covenant.

Covenant. So that in Christ Jesus we are encouraged to commit our Souls unto God, as a faithful Creator ; and to take no uneasy, anxious Thought about this Life, and the Events of it in Futurity ; but to rely on the Care and Providence of God, in a dutiful and prudent Management of ourselves and our Affairs.

4. A Mind stay'd on God must have a continual Eye to *his Word*. There is no Doubt but divine Providence directs all Events to *some Ends*, that are suited to the Character of God as supreme *Governour* of the World. These Ends are most clearly and certainly discovered to us in his Word : To promote and secure which, all the Wheels of Providence are at work. And by a careful Study of *Scripture* and *Providence* together, we shall find an admirable Beauty in some Things that befall us, and others about us, which otherwise we should be apt to blame as Defects or Errors in Providence. A Mind stay'd on God can say, "*Thou shalt guide me with thy Counsel*, and afterward receive me to *Glory*." *Psal. lxxiii. 24.*

5. A Mind stay'd on God, *doth actually commit* it self, and all its Concernments to him. This it doth by Covenant-Surrenders, and Dedications ; and by daily and continual Prayers. The great and main Design of Prayer, is to make the Mind wise and good, easy and happy, by Converses with the *other World*, and with the wisest and best of Beings there ; and by drawing down Communications of Grace from thence, to form the Soul for the Society and Employments of that glorious State : But as to all *Events* in this Life, Prayer is appointed to be the Way of our committing them wholly to the wise Governour of us and of all things ; bringing our Wills to God's, and not so much as

aiming at a governing and directing his Will, by *ours*. This is the true Meaning of the Word Devotion ; and in this Way the Scripture directs to stay the Mind on God. *Phil.* iv. 6, 7. “ Be careful for nothing, but in every Thing by Prayer “ and Supplication with Thanksgiving, let your “ Requests be made known unto God.” Then observe what follows, as it stands connected with such an intire committing all Things to God.— “ And the Peace of God which passeth all Understanding, shall keep your Hearts and Minds “ thro’ Christ Jesus.”

6. There must be a steady referring to the last *Upshot of Things*. We should look to that State which is beyond the Grave, all the while that we are travelling to it, and as we go thro’ all the *Changes* of this World. However, one or other particular Scene, and Condition of Life, may appear to us ; yet we are to depend upon the Truth of that Declaration of *St. Paul*, when all Things are considered *together*, that they will *work* to a good End. “ We know that all Things, (however they may appear *separately*, yet) “ work together for good to them that love God, to them “ who are the called according to his Purpose : *Rom.* viii. 28. *i. e.* who are effectually called into the Christian Covenant and Kingdom, and to the Hope of eternal Life in Christ Jesus.

I’ll add but *one Thing more* under this Head, *viz.* in staying the Mind on God, there is a continual Expectation of its being *well with the Righteous*, and with the *Church of God*, even in Times of *publick Calamities* and *Desolations*. Salvation is promised to the People of God in general, whatever be the Aspect of our *private Affairs*, or the state of Things in the World. A Mind stay’d on God, will still look for a better and happier State
of

of his Church, and his own Time ; and will take great Pleasure in the Thought, whether it come in the present Age or not. “ The Vision is for an appointed Time, but at the End it shall speak and not lie : Though it tarry, wait for it ; because it will surely come, it will not tarry beyond the *fixed Time*. *Habak. ii. 3.*

The setting of one Church against another, and one Party of Christians against another, is a grievous Destroyer of spiritual Peace. Enmity and an unforgiving Temper prevents a Mind and Heart from being brought to a *stay'd* and comfortable Reliance on God. Christians setting themselves against and condemning one another, is a great Hindrance of Good to *them all*. This occasions the Delay of many Blessings, which are to crown their *united State*, and which are only to be produced by their Union. The Prophet *Isaiab* in many Places foretells a very happy and glorious State of the Church of Christ : And his Expression in our Text of *staying the Mind* on God, may very well be extended to the Prophecies and Promises which describe that State. But I must not enlarge upon this.

II. Let us now proceed to consider the *Care* which God takes of the *Peace* of such a Mind.

If you look to the 1st Verse of the Chapter where our Text is, the Preservation of a good Man's Peace is placed, “ in that Salvation which God will appoint for Walls and Bulwarks.” God's immediate *Protection* shall be instead of *Walls* and *Fences*: And his Covenant with his People, puts them into such a State as may well be termed *Salvation*. They shall hereby be rendered as safe, as if their Walls were *Salvation* it self. In the Verse before our Text, the People who enter into such a State of *Peace*, are described by their being a *righteous Nation*. For there is no Peace to the Wicked and Unrighteous.

B

And

And they are such as *keep the Truth*. The *Hebrew* Word is *plural*, the righteous Nation which *keepeth Truths*, even all the *Truths* of God. Thus becoming *righteous*, and keeping God's Truths in Doctrines and Precepts, God will keep the *Peace* of such. Thou wilt keep him in *Peace, Peace*: He shall have both inward and outward Peace. But as we took notice before, the Repetition of the Word *Peace* in the *Hebrew* Language signifies the same Thing with *complete* or perfect Peace in *our Language*.

God that worketh Salvation for the Righteous will *guard* it. He that gives Peace to the Mind which is stay'd on him, will also *keep* that Peace, so as that however it may seem to be interrupted on some Occasions, and under some Temptations, yet it shall not be utterly broken and destroy'd. God keeps and perfects the *Peace* of the Righteous, who stay their Minds on him, *four Ways*.

1. By *his Word*, to which there is a faithful *steddy Adherence*. Keeping the Truth, is one Way by which Peace is kept. God hath specially provided for our Peace by the *Scripture*, to which if we have a conscientious and *steddy* Regard, we shall walk safely, and nothing shall become a standing Offence or Uneasiness, and *Scandal* to us. "Great Peace
" have they that love thy Law, and nothing shall
" offend them. *Pf. cxix. 165.* The *Hebrew* is, they shall have *no Stumbling-Block*.

In the Word of God we have the wisest and *best Rules* for Peace. Here we are taught to fix our *End* right; which is a great Ease to the Mind, and frees it from many *Uncertainties* and *Doubtings*, both in Contrivances and Conduct. One fixed *steddy* Intention—and then the whole Body is full of Light. The Kingdom of God and his Righteousness first,—and then the Addition of *other Things*.

The Word of God also makes our *Way* plain before us. It directs our *Actions* so as to secure our End. It is such a Rule as preserveth from many Snares, Dangers, and Disappointments, that others, who forsake or neglect it fall into. There cannot be a better Method of preserving our Peace than this, *ye shall observe to do as the Lord your God hath commanded you, ye shall not turn aside to the right Hand or to the left, Deut. v. 32.* They that walk by this Rule, when applied to the Gospel, and as far as they have attained to the Knowledge of their Duty as *new Creatures in Christ Jesus*, Peace is pronounced on them. *Gal. vi. 15, 16.*

But then further, in the Word of God we have *special Promises* of being delivered from those Things that would rob us of *our Peace*. The Scripture assures us, of God's being merciful to our Unrighteousness and our *Sins*; comforting under our *Afflictions*; succouring us under the Temptations of the *Devil*, and enabling us to conquer; saving from spiteful and *unreasonable Men*; and being a present Help in every Time of *Trouble*. At the same Time that our Saviour says, "In the World ye shall have Tribulation," he presently adds, "but be of good Cheer, I have overcome the World." *John xvi. 33.* The Things he had spoken were delivered and are recorded for this very Purpose, that in *him we might have Peace*. If neither *Sin*, nor *Afflictions*, nor the Enmity of *Men* or *Devils*, nor worldly *Cares* and *Troubles*, nor *Doubtfulness* and distrustful *Fears* in our own Minds, shall prevail above the Help and Comfort that God promiseth to such as keep his Truth; surely we must say, that there is sufficient Provision made against the Power of every thing that would destroy the *Peace* of a Christian's Mind. Yet it is further to be added,

2. God keeps the Peace of a Mind that is stay'd on him, by the inward powerful *Aids* and *Consolations* of his *Good Spirit*.

This Spirit acts the Part of an *Advocate* for God and Christ in our Hearts. Shews us the great Things of God revealed in Scripture, teacheth us to apply them, and rest assured of their Truth. He is a *renewing* Spirit, helping us to subdue tumultuous Passions and Affections, and to mortify the Deeds of the Flesh. And it is a great Part of this Spirit's Office, to be a *Comforter* to us; under all the Heaviness and Sadness of our Hearts, *pointing* out to us those Consolations which belong to us as Christians, and *enabling* us to rejoice in them. The *Fruit of the Spirit is Love, Joy, Peace, &c.* Gal. v. 22.

Where this is not taken into the Account of God's keeping the Peace of that Mind that is stay'd on him, our Peace will be very uncertain, and will fall vastly short of that firm and lasting Peace which our blessed Saviour bequeaths as a *Legacy* to his Followers; a Peace which the World can neither *give*, nor *take away*.

3, God does, *by his Providence*, take Care of the Peace of such as stay their Minds on him.

Whilst his good *Spirit* guards and keeps the Peace from inbred Mutinies, and Corruptions, his good *Providence* poiseeth and balanceth Things about us, setting Prosperity and Adversity most wisely one against the other.

We are not to expect that *Providence* will promote and keep our Peace by effecting Things in an *extraordinary* way, when the *ordinary* Methods of it are sufficient. If any Occurrences which would destroy our Peace, are such only as are *common to Men*; or the natural Effects and Consequences of our *own Actions*, and arise from such Stations, Circumstances, or Relations as we have chosen, or fall'n into;

into ; then we are to look for and secure inward Peace by submitting to the settled Order and Course of Things, and to those particular Disposals of Providence that hath seen fit we should be *so* or *so* circumstanced and situated in Life. By due regards to the Word of God, and the Spirit of Christianity, we may find something in every Dispensation of Providence that shall still tend to promote our *main End*, viz. the Salvation of our Souls, and in this we may be at Peace.

But besides this, Providence doth *so poise Things*, even in its ordinary Methods, as to send in Comforts and Encouragements *one Way*, when Things that are grievous and threaten quite to overthrow our Peace befall us *another Way*.

What is wanting in *one* Friend or Relation, is sometimes supplied by the Goodness and Kindness of *another*. What is grievous and perverse in *one*, is sometimes more than poised by what is grateful and serviceable in another. Those Things that excite Trouble in *one Situation* of Life, may be fully ballanced, if not outweighed, by those Things that raise Esteem and give Pleasure in *another Situation*. The want of Health and of a Constitution to undertake some of the honourable or gainful Employments of Life, may be an Occasion of turning to Ways of Living that have less Temptation, and more Opportunities for cultivating the Mind, and promoting its Welfare. The Want of Beauty, or Wealth, or those worldly Possessions which are the Lot of some, may be made up to others by a happier *Genius*, and by some greater Endowments of Mind. And the Want of natural Sagacity and Genius may also, on the other Hand, be supplied by some *outward Advantages*, or acquired Abilities. By such Methods and Disposals as these, the ordinary Care of Providence doth a great deal to secure our Peace.

If

If after all, extraordinary *Calamities*, or Things grievous to an *uncommon* degree, overtake and fall upon a good Man, so that he is at his very Wit's End, he is then encouraged to look for *special* and *uncommon* Interpositions of Providence. From hence arose that proverbial Expression amongst the *Jews*, "In the Mount it shall be seen." *Gen.* xxii. 14. Thus when the common Methods of Redress failed, the Prophet says, "the Lord saw it, " and it displeased him that there was no Judgment: And he saw that there was no Man, and " wondered that there was no Intercessor; therefore " his Arm brought Salvation unto him, and his " Righteousness it sustained him. *Isai.* lix. 15, 16.

According to these Accounts of the Providence of God, ordinary and extraordinary, God takes Care to keep the Peace of that Mind that is stay'd on him.

4. God keeps the Peace of them that stay their Minds on him, by *uniting* them, so as to *love* and *comfort* one another.

Though there ever were, and, while Souls dwell in such Bodies as these, ever will be, different Sentiments amongst them that make the *Scriptures* their main *Study*, as well as amongst those who follow *other Studies*; and though there be various Modes of Worship, and great Varieties in Practice; yet a Mind that truly believes the Word of God, and is under the Conduct of the Spirit of Truth, and that hath a careful Regard to Providence, and an acknowledged Dependence upon it, will be always ready to *unite* with those that agree in the *main Points* of Religion. There is nothing breaks, and disunites so much, as *various Trusts* and Dependencies. But where Men are quite free from *earthly* and *party* Dependencies of all Kinds, and have one and the same Resolution to wait on God, and expect their Salvation

tion intirely from him, this is the strongest, surest Cement of Hearts. By this Union God doth, as it were with invifible Bands, maintain Peace amongst all truly good Men, notwithstanding their being at Variance fometimes about Things *external*, and of *lefs importance* in Religion.

The Spirit of God, and the Spirit of this World, 'tis certain, never can unite. For the World is enmity to God; and the Spirit that worketh in the Children of *this World* is directly oppofite to the Spirit of the *Gospel*. Both thefe are faid [*ἐνεργεῖν*] to be accomplifhing their different Purpofes by a mighty *Energy*, carrying ftrongly the Thoughts and Endeavours of Men, for Heaven or Earth, as they are under the different Power and Agency of thefe *contrary Spirits*. So that whenever any Contefts arife in the World, in which the Spirits of Men are to be influenced by thefe great *invifible Agents*, to unite on one Side or t'other, in order to produce or hinder any *great Event*, God keeps the Minds of thofe that are ftay'd on him in a *Unity of Affection*, comforting and encouraging one another, and promoting *each other's Peace* under all the Hatreds and ill Ufage of the World.

The Scripture, indeed, tells us, that when Iniquity abounds, the *Love of many waxeth cold*. And there is nothing difturbs the Peace of a Man whole Mind is continually directed to God, fo much, as to fee a growing Difaffection to the Things of God, and growing Divifions upon worldly Accounts. But yet God preserves the Piety and Peace of the Wife and Faithful, by enabling them to lay afide their *leffer Differences* upon great Occafions, and to go into healing Meafures, that they may provoke one another to Love and good Works. He brings thofe that are of one Soul and one Heart to converse freely and delightfully one with another. And a *few* thus united in evil Times are a great Support

Support and Comfort to each other. Their Peace may be *as perfect* in the Way of their Duty, tho' few in Number ; and they may as firmly agree to stand up for God, against the Workers of Iniquity, and to be Witnesses for him against Prophaneness and Infidelity, as if their Number was greater.

In thus uniting they may have great Peace and Joy, amidst great Difficulties and Contempt.

These are the Ways by which God promotes and maintains the Peace of such as stay their Minds on him.

III. General Head is, That the *Foundation* of a good Man's Peace, and the *Reason* of God's keeping it, is *that Trust* which is reposed in him.

From the Account given of *staying the Mind* on God, we may learn what it is to *trust* in him. The Mind that is stay'd by such Exercises of Trust as those before mentioned is kept in Peace by that very Trust ; and *because* it thus trusteth, and stayeth the Thoughts on God, he will keep its Peace. The *Hebrew Particle* ׃, is sometimes rendered *if*, and *when*, which in our Text is rendered *because*. If we read the Words, thou wilt keep him in perfect Peace whose Mind is stay'd on thee, upon *this Condition* that he *trust* in thee, or *when* he trusteth in thee, they then describe the *Qualification* and *State* of that Mind that enjoys this Blessing. If we read the Words as they stand in our Translation, " Thou wilt keep him in Peace, " BECAUSE he trusteth in " thee," then they lead us to consider what there is in *trusting God*, that should be a Reason for his keeping such in Peace.

I. We may consider a *divine Trust*, as it *qualifies* a Soul for Peace. It frees the Mind from those Things that *binder its* Peace. Such as *Pride*, and *Deceit*, *Self-Confidence*, *Human-Confidence*, and all
sinful

sinful *Reliances* on uncertain and perishing Enjoyments. A religious Trust also puts the *Mind* into such a happy Frame, as to be *satisfied* in itself, and with every thing that God is pleased to appoint. A Mind that hath a *great deal* of Trust is commonly a very *easy Mind*; whereas, on the other Hand, a Mind that is perpetually *distrustful*, is a disturbed *restless* Mind. To trust in God therefore is really to get out of a disturbed State, and to be actually in a State of Peace and Rest in our selves. But,

2. We may also consider Trust in God as it is a *Reason* for his Care about us, and *keeping us* in *perfect Peace*. He hath expressly promised, and hath often repeated the Promises, that such as *trust* in him shall not be *ashamed*, and that they shall not be *left* and *forsaken* by him. And therefore, *because* there is such a Trust as God hath engaged himself to *own* and *honour* in his Word, *that* is a Reason to him why he should keep the Peace of a Mind staying it self on him. A Soul confiding in God shall, on two Accounts, or, for two very good Reasons, be preserved from *desolating Evils*, and from the Loss of its Peace. Namely, because God will not have a religious Trust to be disgraced, and become *utterly contemptible in the World*: And also, because he cannot give up those that hope and confide in his Mercy, to become *heartless* and *discouraged in themselves*. When he sees them sinking, he is then said to *give Power to the Faint*; and to them that *have no Might* he *increaseth Strength*. *Even the Youths shall faint and be weary, and the young Men shall utterly fall: But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their Strength.* Isai. xl. latter end.

These Things deserve to be enlarged on, and will afford great Encouragement in the Ways of Religion, notwithstanding all the Discouragements that

are thrown upon Hope and Trust in God by an unbelieving, sensual and perverse Generation.

But the Time now remaining will only allow a few Things to be added by way of APPLICATION.

1. We may learn from what has been said, the *State* of a Mind that is *truly religious*. It is not doubtful and unsettled as to its main Dependance and Hope, whether God or this World shall be relied on: All Debates are overcome betwixt the Service of GOD, and *Mammon*. The Heart is determined for GOD. It is not slavishly afraid of the Deity, or of the Wrath to come, placing all Religion in the Exercises of Repentance, and grieving under the Burdens and Evils of Life, but in rising to a comfortable, cheerful *Trust* in God. True Religion is not a wavering uncertain Thing, attended to only by Fits and Starts; but it is a *staying* the Mind on God. So that a Mind truly pious, is a *stayed* Mind, and it becomes such by setting the Lord always before it. “ I have set the Lord always before me; “ because he is at my Right-hand, I shall not be “ moved.” *Psal. xvi. 8.*

2. When we *sin* against God, we see the Reason of our Spirits becoming *restless* and *uneasy*. By departing from God, the Mind loseth its Stay and Comfort; and the further such Departures go, the more difficult is it to return, and to overcome the Apprehensions of the divine Displeasure so as to venture afresh to stay itself on God. But till it does return, however it may amuse itself to keep out uneasy Thoughts, yet it will find no rational and lasting Rest. If we have any Proofs of the Mercy of God to us, in delivering our Lives when in Danger of Death, and helping us when brought low, such Instances of sparing restoring Mercy should

should make us say as the Psalmist does, " Return
" unto thy Rest, O my Soul! for the Lord hath
" dealt bountifully with thee." *Psal. cxvi. 7.*

3. We should look upon it as a Matter of very
just and *great Concern*, that there is so *little Trust*
in God, even amongst those who are counted the
People of God themselves in our Day. What kind
of false Trust is there against which the Scripture
warns us, that one or other even of those that pro-
fess to fear and worship God do not run into? What
human or worldly Confidences are not good Men
carried, by one Means or other, to fix an undue
Dependence upon. This makes such *immoderate*
Sorrow as many give way to, when the Persons or
Things on which they too much stayed their Minds
are removed from them. And this occasions such
following the Manners and Ways of rich and worldly
People, and following evil Customs and Fashions,
because many expect *more from these Things*, than
from a steady Reliance on God, and an Adherence
to his Word.

In this we are too much like *Ephraim* of old,
and have reason to fear the Wo denounced against
him. " Ephraim *is like a silly Dove* without Heart ;
" they call to *Egypt*, they go to *Affyria* : Wo unto
" them, for they have fled from me : Destruction
" unto them, because they have transgressed against
" me ; though I have redeemed them, yet they
" have spoken Lies against me. They have not
" cried unto ME with their Heart, when they howl-
" ed upon their Beds : they assemble themselves for
" Corn and Wine, and they rebel against ME :
" They return, but not to the Most High, they
" are like a deceitful Bow." *Hof. vii. 11, &c.*

4. We may learn from God's keeping the Peace
of a Mind that is stay'd on him, how every Man

that enjoys this Blessing ought to look after it himself. God will not keep that for us, that we grow careless about, and do not know how to value for ourselves. In the very same Ways by which God is the Guardian and Giver of Peace, we are to look after the Preservation of it. Namely :

By keeping his *Truths*, and diligently observing his *Word* ; that our governing Ends and Aims may be such as the Scriptures direct ; and that all our Actions, and the Course of our Lives may be according to the *Rules* and *Examples* there set before us. If we are carried from the *Scriptures*, the Enemies of our Peace will attack us from every *Quarter*, and soon be too hard for us. “ Unless thy Law “ had been my Delight, I should then have perished in mine Affliction.” *Psal.* cxix. 92.

We should also carefully observe the Disposal of Things in the *ordinary* Methods of *Providence* ; that when our Peace is struck at by *some* things, we may take Encouragement from *others*. And when *complicated Evils* bear upon us in a Manner that threatens quite to overset us, we may then look and pray for more *special* and *signal* Appearances of Providence on our Behalf.

We should withal Consider the great Office and Work of the SPIRIT of God in the Hearts of Men. We should pray to God for this *holy* and *free* Spirit: *Psal.* li. 12. And should watch carefully against those Sensualities, and Passions, that would grieve him away from us. *Eph.* iv. 30.

For the Preservation of our Peace, we are also to mark those that *cause Divisions* in the Christian World, and avoid them. And when Differences multiply, and Contentions grow warm and strong, we should then keep our Minds and Thoughts more upon those Things in which *all are united* that love our Lord Jesus Christ in Sincerity, than upon those Things that are made the Occasion of their Animosities.

And still, the *following Peace* though it fly from us; and taking all the Measures that we can to make Peace, should be our Care and Endeavour.

These are the Ways in which we should look after Peace in and for ourselves, as they are God's Ways of keeping those in Peace whose Minds are stayed on him.

5. Since Trust in God hath the Promise of Peace and qualifies for it, we should therefore be *excited to this trusting confiding Disposition and Frame of Soul*. "Trust in him at all times, ye People, pour out your Hearts before him; God is a Refuge for us." *Psal. lxii. 8.* What can be more becoming a *Creature*, than to stay it self upon its *Maker*? And what can discourage us from this, when the Gospel hath so effectually provided for our Reconciliation to God, and his merciful Regards to us, and Care over us? If we truly *love* God, that will lead us to trust him, and to dislike our selves whenever we get into a distrustful Way. God loves to be trusted; and the making him our GOD by Covenant Transactions, indispensably oblige us to make him our TRUST. When we have committed our selves, with every thing that concerns us, into his Hands, we are to remember the *Vows* that are upon us, and to be faithful to them both in Life and Death. "Tho' he slay me, yet will I trust in him." *Job xiii. 15.*

That these Things may now have the more powerful and lasting Effect, the Providence of God hath so ordered it, that you should have an Account of their being *exemplified* in the Spirit and Temper, the Life and Death of Mrs. ELIZ. HUGHES. Who was Sister to your stated Minister, and the eldest Branch of the Family out of which she was buried this last Week. She was the Daughter of the late Reverend Mr. *George Hughes* of *Canterbury*, under whose se-

rious

rious and familiar Instructions she was acquainted with the Scriptures, and with the Principles of Religion in a catechetical Way, from a Child. His good Example, his affectionate Prayers, and his great Love of Devotion, made such early and gradual Impressions of Religion on the Mind of the deceased, that she was as one *sanctified from the Womb*.

In her Childhood she was ready to impart to other Children the Instructions she had received, and was particularly valued in the Neighbourhood where she lived on that account.

She was observed, when in *London*, at about 12 Years of Age, to be most tenderly affected at the Hearing of a *Sermon* on these Words of *St. Peter*, “ Whom having not seen, ye love: In whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoyce with Joy unspeakable, and full of Glory.” 1 *Pet.* i. 8. Thus early were her Affections carried to the World above. And by a delightful Converse with the Scriptures and those Books that recommend and explain them, she became early acquainted with God, so as to be at Peace; and that Peace was strengthened and continued by learning more and more to stay her Mind on God.

She was exercised with much Weakness and many Afflictions; she was call'd also to take a *great Part* of the Care and Business of her Mother's House, and of a fatherless Family, upon her; under all Labours, and bodily Disorders, and various Troubles and Difficulties still maintaining a cheerful Trust in God, and promoting the Peace and Good of all about her.

She would often speak of the Unhappiness and Disappointment that attended *false Trusts*; and tho' one of the most grateful Creatures for every Kindness she met with, yet would not allow herself to rest on the Favour of any, without looking to the first

first Mover and great Director of it. Nor was she ever troublesome by shewing an Expectation of greater Respect than was paid her ; or by expressing any Uneasiness, or Distrust of God, or of Friends, if Things did not succeed according to probable Appearances, and well meant Endeavours.

She had a practical Sense of the Perfections of God ; ever setting them before her : And had a great regard to a superintending Providence, which she would often speak of with uncommon Discerning, and Pleasure. The Covenant and Promises of God, were the constant Stay of her Mind. His Day, and House, and Worship, were most highly esteemed : And in sacramental Surrenders and Claims she took great Delight. Those Things which too many would have thought a Reason for being absent now and then from a Sacrament, she would account no Reason for so much as *one Omission* ; but would rather make them an Argument for closer and continued Applications to God. And would often help others to get over their Hindrances and Objections. Her private Devotions were a continual and daily Help to the right staying her Mind on God. And a referring all Things that befel her, to that State which is *beyond the Grave*, made all easy, yea afforded much Joy. To shew at all Times such an *Evenness* and Goodness of Disposition, and such a Trust in the Providence and Promises of God, to the Comfort and Encouragement of all about her, as she did, was the Wonder and Happiness of those that lived with her ; who can say much more upon this Head, than it would be proper in this Place for me to do.

She was a most dutiful Child to her Parents ; and a great Support and Help to an afflicted Mother under many Pains and Cares since her widowed State. She was an affectionate Sister, a constant Friend,
and

and good to many ; in her lower Sphere doing a Variety of kind Offices.

She was studious of *Peace*, and to prevent Misunderstandings, or to remove them as far as lay in her Power.

She was diligent in Business ; agreeable in Conversation ; her Mind usefully furnish'd ; her Temper ever obliging, much above the Vanities and Amusements of the present Age, but free from all satyrical Turns upon others. Prudent without Affectation, respectful without Flattery, cheerful without Levity, free without Falshood, steddily without Obstinacy, and ready to every good Work.

She was a great Example of Meekness and Patience ; a Lover of charitable Actions, and of all good People ; much esteemed while she liv'd, and justly lamented in her Death.

And now if it should be asked, how such a Person died, and what an End she made ? I answer, just such an End as one would expect of such a Life. Speaking gratefully of all the Kindness she had met with in this World, and looking joyfully and with a lively Hope to the Delights of the World to come. In the very Pains of Death, requesting of God that no impatient Expressions might drop from her Lips. And God then kept her in Peace, and gave her such Fore-tasts of Heaven, that she could talk of the Society and Entertainments of that happy Place, as if her Pains were nothing to her expected Joys. She desired to commit her Spirit into the Hands of her Redeemer, and declared that all her Trust was in the Gospel Covenant. And when the last Prayer was concluded, that was put up for her about the middle of the Day, she spoke of it with a particular Satisfaction : And in the close of the Day, she fell asleep. I think we need not scruple to place her among them that “ sleep in “ Jesus, whom God will bring with him.” 1 *Thess.* iv. 14. This

This is a short, but (by those that were best acquainted with the Deceased it will be allowed) a just account of her *staying her Mind* on God; and of the many Excellencies, and valuable Qualities, which arose from, and were sustained by, this pious steady Trust. It is not pretended, that she was without Blemishes and Imperfections, either in the Matters of God, or in other Parts of the Conduct of Life. She was very sensible of her own Faults, and look'd for the Remission of Sins only through the Blood of Christ. She laboured under some Disadvantage in her *outward Form*, but it was abundantly made up in the *amiable Temper*, and the *Christian Graces* that adorn'd her Mind. And no Faults or Blemishes shall be found hereafter, when that which is sown in *Dishonour* shall be raised in *Glory*, that which is sown in *Weakness* shall be raised in *Power*, and that which is sown a *natural*, shall be raised a *spiritual Body*. I Cor. xv. 43, 44.

Let those that mourn, therefore, be as if they mourned not: For the Time is short. Let us learn to stay our Minds on *God* in every Condition of Life, and throughout all the Labours and Tryals of it; and then *God* will keep us in perfect Peace, real, solid Peace, while we *live*; and our Peace will be such as shall not be destroyed even by *Death it self*. “ Mark the Perfect, and behold the Up-
“ right, for the End of such is Peace. *Psal.* xxxvii.

37.

When we consider our selves as *dying Creatures*, if we would preserve *our Peace*, we must watch against two Extremes, with Respect to our Death: The one is, not to *lose the Thoughts of dying* in the Enjoyments of Sense and this World; for then all will be Terror and Tumult when Death knocks at the Door: The other is, not to give Way to a *slavish Dread*, so as thro' Fear of Death to spend a Life in continual *Bondage*. “ Thanks be to God,

D

“ who

“ who giveth us the Victory, through our Lord
 “ Jesus Christ.”

To close all: We should look to God not only to *keep us* in perfect Peace, as far as such Perfection is attainable in *this World*; but we should hope and trust in him, to *receive us* to perfect Peace, as perfect as Heaven it self can make it, when we go into that *World unseen*. Therefore let us add to our Text the Words of the Verse following, and let them abide with us: “ Trust ye in the Lord for ever; for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting Strength.”

To him be everlasting Glory. Amen.



Of blessing God both when He gives and takes.

A
S E R M O N

Occasion'd by the

D E A T H

OF THE

SON of Mr. N. WARD,

At the Age of Fifteen.

This Sermon was printed in the Year 1723, from
a Copy of it then given to the Family in Writing.
It is now reprinted, for the correcting of the nu-
merous Errors that were in the former Impression,
which was published without the Author's being
so much as acquainted with it.



L O N D O N:

Printed for R. HETT, at the *Bible and Crown* in
the *Poultry*. M.DCC.XXXVI.

Of blessing God with His gifts and graces

A

S E R M O N

Occasioned by the

D E A T H

OF THE

Son of Mr. N. Ward,

At the age of thirteen

This sermon was preached in the Year 1744, from
a Copy of it given to the Family by the Author.
It is now reprinted, for the correction of the original
manuscript, and in a new and improved edition.
At New York, and sold by the Author, at his house
in the city of New York.



Printed for J. B. Smith, at the New York Press, in the city of New York.



JOB Chap. i. Ver. 21.

“ ——— The Lord gave, and the Lord
 “ has taken away; blessed be the
 “ Name of the Lord.

TH E Death of a very *hopeful Youth*, and the Concern of Parents to improve such a Providence to some religious Purposes, occasion my present Choice of the Words read for the Subject of the ensuing Discourse.

That most pious and excellent Man, whose Words these are, sets us a brave Example of Patience, and Submission to God, under the greatest Trials that can befall us in this Life. And not only does he submit to God as a Sovereign, and as one whom he could not resist; but he blesses him as a *wise* and *just Disposer* of all Things, and as one with whose Proceedings he could find no Fault. The Substance of this Prince of the *East*, which was very great, had been mostly taken away by the *Sabæans*, and *Chaldæans*, invading the Land and destroying his Servants. His Sheep were consumed by a great and unaccountable Fire, that fell as it seems, from the Clouds upon them. And his ten Children were destroyed by the Fall of an House, where they were all met together. And one Messenger came upon the Back of another, with these dreadful Tidings; infomuch that he who in the third

Verse of this Chapter, is said to be *the greatest of all the Men in the East*; we find in the close of this Chapter speaking as one *stript naked and destitute of all Things*. And yet all these Afflictions could not excite a blasphemous Thought of God. But when he rent his Robe, and shaved his Head, he fell down and worshipped, and said, *Naked came I out of my Mother's Womb, and naked shall I return thither: The Lord gave, &c.*

How shameful would it be for us, if when we meet with *one Instance* of Affliction only, or with those Trials that are of a *lesser Nature*, compared with the Calamities that came upon this good Man all at once; if we should be hurried into sinful Passions, or in any thing should charge God foolishly. This one Consideration, that he who *gives* has an undoubted Right to *take*, should make us *bless his Name* in whatever befalls us.

There are three things which by these Words we are led to enlarge our Thoughts upon.

I. We ought to consider God, as the *Giver* of all things to us: *The Lord gave.*

II. We should also own and look to him in *the taking any thing away* from us: *The Lord hath taken away.*

III. His *Name* should be *blest'd* by us, when he *takes*, as well as when he *gives*: *Blessed be the Name of the Lord.*

I. We ought to consider God as the Giver of all Things to us: *The Lord gave* ——— All that was before in Possession, that *Job* had now the sad Tidings of being gone from him, he plainly acknowledges to have been from God. All his Wealth and Plenty, his Sheep and his Oxen, his Fields and
his

his Cattle, his Servants and his Children, he speaks of as the Gift of God. Let us observe this, and apply it to every thing in our own Case.

1. Those things which he had improved or *acquired by his own Skill*, and *Prudence*, he yet looks upon as the Gifts of God. His Wealth, and Lands, and all his Gains, he acknowledges, to be as entirely from God, as if he had done nothing toward the obtaining them. He mentions not his own Policy, and Care, and Diligence, but ascribes all to the Gift of God. He well knew, that *Riches are not always to Men of Understanding, nor Favour to Men of Skill*; but Incidencies and Opportunities are from God; and in all our Devices 'tis he that must *direct our Steps*, or else we shall devise *hurtful*, instead of *profitable* things. All that Wisdom and Foresight, that render a Man successful in the Management of his Affairs, are from God; and therefore whatever follows upon these, must be owned the Gift of God. And there are so many Casualties, and such unexpected Changes, and Alterations in the Course of things in the World, that when a Man has concerted Matters never so wisely, yet he can't be sure of the Event, if God does not providentially appear for him. Whatever therefore is acquired by our own Skill, Prudence, or Diligence, must be set down as the Gift of God.

This is a very material Point in Religion, and what we find very much distinguishes good Men, from the Worldly and Wicked. Vain and Worldly Men speak in the Language of the *Affyrian*, Isai. x. 13. *By the Strength of my Hand I have done it, and by my Wisdom, for I am prudent, &c. q. d.* By such vigorous and wise Applications to Persons and Things, and by such a prudent Management of Affairs, I gained this and the other, and made such Advantages to my self. Whereas a truly good Man,

Man, in the midst of all his Plenty and Honours, looks to God as the sole Proprietor and Donor of them: As you see, *1 Chron. xxix. 12. Both Riches and Honour come of thee, and thou reignest over all, and in thine Hand it is to make great, and to give Strength unto all. All things come of thee, and of thine own we give thee. The Lord gave, in Job's Esteem, even those things which he had acquired or improved by his own Skill.*

2. Those Things which were produced by the *common Course of Nature*, he yet acknowledges to be given by the God of Nature. The multiplying of his Flocks and Herds, of which the *Chaldeans* and *Sabæans* had now rob'd him, he reckoned amongst the things which he says *the Lord gave*. And the natural Productions of the Earth and of his Grounds, by which his Cattle were fed and nourished, were owned by him to be Gifts from God. Thus in the *Prophet's* Language, God is said to hear the Heavens, and the Heavens to hear the Earth, when it calls for the Influences, and Showers thereof; and by these Means its Fruits are produced. *Hos. ii. 21.* The Sheep bringing forth Thousands and Ten Thousands, and the other Cattle being strong to labour, is expressly ascribed to the Favour and Blessing of God, *Pf. cxliv.* the latter end. And the Cattle upon a thousand Hills are all said to be his; so that even those Things which are common Blessings, and the immediate Productions of natural Causes, yet are by good Men esteemed the Gifts of God.

Children are more especially to be acknowledged God's Gifts: And God is to be praised for making and forming them in the Womb, as well as for his first making Man out of the Dust of the Earth. There are three Places of Scripture which laid together, shew the Wisdom and Power of God in the Structure,

Structure, and first Formation of human Bodies. *Job* x. 10, 11. *Psal.* cxxxix. 14, 15, 16. *Ecclesi.* xi. 5. And in one of the Psalms 'tis said, that Children are an Heritage of the Lord, and the Fruit of the Womb is his Reward, *Psal.* cxxvii. 3. A good Man looks upon his Children with a very different Eye and Sense of Things from that which the common and corrupt Part of the World have: *The Lord gave.* The Productions of Nature are the Gift of God.

3. Those Things which are gain'd to us by the *Services and Kindness, and the Help of others*, are yet to be esteem'd the Gifts of God. If *Job* had prosper'd through the Faithfulness and wise Care of his Servants, or through the Estates and Legacies that came from Ancestors and Friends; yet still he does not rest in the Instruments, and say, such an one saved, or got, or managed gainfully for me; such a Part of my Estate I had from this Hand, and that from another; but *the Lord gave.* He gave those very Servants, which were so diligent in my Service, and profitable to me, though now slain: He gave those very Friends and Instruments, which have acted for me, though now taken away: And therefore all that came by their Hands, and by their Means, must be esteemed the Gifts of God.

It is not so much the Hand that gets for us, or gives to us, that a good Man fixes his Eye upon; as the great God who guides that Hand to be helpful to us. Not but that *Job* had a very tender and grateful Sense of the Regards due to all about him, as we see in other Parts of this Book; but he knew how to make a Difference in looking to Means and Instruments, and in acknowledging the Principal and Fountain of all Good; *the Lord gave.*

4. Those Things which are in a very grievous and remarkable Manner *taken away*, yet may be looked upon as given by God, notwithstanding such a Loss of them. If any should suggest, that surely *Job* had come ill by his Riches, and that his Family and his Goods and his Flocks were multiplied by ill Means, since all were so remarkably destroy'd : Those Suggestions must vanish when this one Expression is duly consider'd, That they were the Gift of God. This plainly shews that he had taken no indirect Steps, nor liv'd in any ill Course, to procure the Things which were now gone ; but every Thing came to him in God's Way, and by his Blessing, so as that he could say, *the Lord gave*. A Child, an Estate, or this and the other Blessing may be given by God, and yet may be snatch'd away in such a Manner, as shall give Occasion for Censure to hasty People. So *Job's* Friends reproached and censured him. Or it may sometimes make a Man ready to accuse and condemn himself. But such was the sincere Piety and Integrity of *Job*, that the Manner of losing his Blessings does not take away the Sense of God's giving them. Tho' they are thus amazingly gone, yet *the Lord gave*. Yea, let his Calamities be imputed to what others about him pleased, yet he looks to God in his Losses, as well as in his outward Blessings. That leads to the next Part of the Text.

II. We should own God in the *taking away* of any Thing from us, as well as in giving it to us. *The Lord hath taken away*. What was immediately done by the Invasion of Enemies, the *Chaldeans* and *Sabæans*, and by the Malice and Contrivance of the Devil raising Storms, and raining Fire, and the like ; yet *Job* imputes to the providential Disposal and Permission of God ; *the Lord hath taken away*.

away. In this Style the Scripture constantly speaks; and therefore this should teach us, in all such Cases, to make our Submissions to God, and with great Reverence and Fear to acknowledge him. I will here beg Leave to enlarge a little on the two following Particulars only.

1. It is certain that neither *wicked Men*, nor *evil Spirits* can take away any Thing from us, without *God's allowing it* so to be; and therefore it may properly be said that he takes, when he suffers them to do so. Hence it is, that, in another Part of this Book, *Job* says, *God hath deliver'd me to the Ungodly, and turned me over into the Hands of the Wicked*, *Job xvi. 11.* And our Saviour tells his Judge, He could have no Power over him, if it were not given him from Above. And in the Chapter where our Text is, the Devil owns that he could do nothing against *Job*, so long as there was an Hedge made about him, and about all that he had. Now what Fence could keep out Devils, but a Guard of Angels, or the immediate Presence and Protection of God? This must be withdrawn, and God must give Leave to the Evil Spirits, or they could not break in upon him. Yea, in the Gospel we are expressly told, *That a Sparrow does not fall to the Ground without our Father*; much less can a Family be broken, or a Life taken away, without God's allowing it.

But then further, God may so far glorify himself by taking away some Persons out of this World, and those who are taken away may be removed in so much Mercy, and with such Advantage to themselves, that there shall be a special and immediate Agency of God in removing of them: Thus 'tis said of *Enoch*, *He was not, for God took him*. And many, particularly in their Youth, may be taken away in Mercy, to prevent their falling into those

Temptations and those Evils, which, had they continued longer here, they might have been exposed to. Some are taken away in Mercy, as well as others in Judgment: But whatever be the Means or Instruments of removing any Blessing, it is certain that neither wicked Men nor evil Spirits can take away any Thing from us, without God's allowing it so to be.

2. When any Thing is taken from us, 'tis better to think of the *Just and Sovereign Disposals of Heaven*, and to eye the *Hand of God*, than to fix our Thoughts on lower and second Causes. Enemies came and plunder'd *Job's Estate*, Fire consumed his Sheep, and Wind blew down the House which kill'd his Children; but in all he looks to that God, to whom he knew both Fire, and Wind, and Enemies, and all Things were subject. So when we sustain any Loss of Estate, or Friends, or Children, we should do much better to eye the superintending Providence of God, than to perplex and trouble our selves by imputing our Losses and Afflictions to this and the other Thing, as the immediate Cause of it.

To keep our Eye thus intent on Heaven will greatly compose and still our Passions. *I was dumb and open'd, not my Mouth, because thou didst it, Psal. xxxix. 9.* And this will enable us to turn in upon our selves, and consider what God intends by such Calamities to rebuke and correct in us, and what he would hereby teach us. It would shew us how sadly ungrateful we commonly are, in not looking to God, and owning him as we should do, when he gives a Blessing: And therefore he will fix our Thoughts upon him, in the taking it away, and shew us the Worth of it by the Want of it. This would make us more penitent that we had not used such Blessings better, and honoured God
more

more in them and with them : Or if we have had our Hearts too much set upon them, and we have placed too much of our Satisfaction in them ; then to look upon God as taking them away, will tend to wean us more from every dying perishing Comfort, and make us more intent upon securing an Interest in that Redeemer, in whom is everlasting Life and Consolation ; and who hath purchased for us those Things, in the Heavens, which fade not away. By thus looking to God, we should learn to rejoice when any Blessing is given, with a Fear that would *balance* our Spirits ; because it is continually liable to be taken away : And we should trust in him that takes, as knowing he also can give what may be better to us, and fitter for us, than the Blessings he removes.

III. The Name of God should be blessed by us, when he takes as well as when he gives. *Blessed be the Name of the Lord.* We are not only to refrain from saying any thing *hardly* of God, or lifting up our Tongues *against* him ; but we must bless his Name : And this must be done inwardly with our *Hearts* and *Spirits*, as well as with our Lips and by our *outward Expressions*. Now in this Blessing the Name of God the following Things are imply'd.

I. An acknowledging him as the *blessed and only Potentate*, the sovereign Director of Evil, as well as Good. To make God the Dispenser of Good, and not the Disposer of Evil, is to make him but half a Governor, and it is to set up another Potentate with him and against him ; as some have very corruptly taught, that there is a Principle of Evil, a God doing and directing Evil ; as well as a Fountain of Good, and a God of Love and Mercy.

But

But this is directly contrary to the *Scripture Theology*: For besides God's being said to be the blessed and *only Potentate* (which necessarily excludes an evil and wicked Potentate, mixing with him in ruling and directing Things) he does by his *Prophets* assert plainly, that *corrective Evils* are from him, tho' no *moral Evils* can be so; that is, considered in those Things wherein their *Immorality* lieth. He is a God that hateth *Iniquity*, and no *Sin* can dwell with him or be done by him. But as to those Things that befall us in a Way of *Loss*, or *Punishment*, those Evils which break in upon our present Peace, and cross our Wishes, and take away Worldly Blessings and Enjoyments from us, these God does say are from him; though many of our Losses and Punishments arise from Men and Things that are *wicked* and *immoral*. As in that well known Place, *Isa. xlv. 7. I form the Light, and create Darknes; I make Peace, and create Evil.* And in that yet fuller Passage, *Amos iii. 6. Shall there be Evil in a City, and the Lord has not done it? Can moral Evils themselves happen, and the Lord not do somewhat?* as it may be there read. Shall not God do something to over-rule the Course of them, when they are to become Punishments to others? And shall he not bring upon the Actors of evil Things the Fruit of their *own Doings*?

These corrective Evils are necessary for the Government of the World, and for the good of God's own Children; and when they are directed by infinite Wisdom, they are made to serve Purposes worthy of him who is the Father of Mercies. *Bil-lad* said one of the harshest Things that could possibly be utter'd, concerning *Job's* Children being struck dead, and taken away so suddenly, *Ch. viii. ver. 4. Thy Children have sinned against him, and he has cast them away in their Transgression.* What a

Stab

Stab to the very Heart of *Job* must this needs be, who used to sacrifice for his Children with such an anxious Concern, lest they should in their Hearts have cursed God? But this was rashly and hardly said, as many other Things were, by *Job's* Friends, in the Day when God took away his Blessings from him. However, though *Job* might have better Thoughts of his Children, and of God, in this awful Dispensation; yet he was fully apprised of the Hand of God in the Evil which had befallen them; *the Lord takes away*. And even common Reason and Philosophy would teach us, that there is nothing so shocking in ascribing these Kinds of Evil to God, as some may imagine. 'Tis a fine Passage out of *Epietus*, (that Mr. Henry quotes in his Explication of the Text I am upon.) When thou art deprived of any Comfort, suppose a *Child taken away by Death*, or a Part of thy Estate lost, say not, *I have lost it*; but, *I have return'd it to the right Owner*: And tho' thy Loss happen'd by ill Hands, or ill Means, what is it to thee by what Hands he that gives is pleas'd to take what he gave? This is one Thing imply'd in Blessing the Name of God.

2. There must be an Owning and Adoring of *those Perfections which make up the great Name of God*, in what Way soever they may be manifested, when God takes as well as when he gives. Is not the *Justice* of God to be seen when he takes away this and the other Blessing for our Sin? Was not God neglected for the sake of such a Comfort? Or was not some evil Affection indulged, or some ill Things practis'd with an Eye to such? And is not the *Wisdom* of God manifest in the Time and Circumstances

ces of taking a Blessing from us? Nay, may we not often observe even the *Mercy* of God in taking a Child or Relative to himself, when under great Misery and Pain? Or when, if they had been spared, they might have been exposed to great Dangers and Temptations in and from the World? So as to the *sovereign Power* and Dominion of God, his Right to do what he pleases with his own Creature must be owned; and in dispensing, or with-holding his Gifts and Favours, his *Sovereignty* is to be revered and bowed to. Thus to bless the Name of God is to do Honour to his Perfections, &c.

3. Blessing the Name of the Lord implies a doing Honour to God in *his Worship and Ordinances*. In the Place where God is worshipped, there he is said to set his Name, *Jer. vii. 12. Go ye to my Place, which was in Shiloh, there I set my Name at the first.* And where should we bless God, but in *his House*? Where (as the *Psalmist* says) *the People are still praising Him!* Blessing him for his Mercies and for his Gifts; blessing him under Troubles and for his Fatherly Corrections; whether he gives or takes, here we should still be blessing his Name. And when he takes *Earthly Comforts*, yet here we can bless him for what he gives in a *Spiritual Sense*. Does he take *Worldly Things* and an outward Estate from any? Yet he gives *Heavenly Things* and eternal Blessings. Does he take away a *Son*, or a *Friend*, or a *Relation* from you, out of this World? Yet he gives you his *own Son* from Heaven, and his *Spirit*, and his *Grace*: And when such Things as these are put together in this Manner, how highly becoming is it for us to say, *The Lord gives,*

gives; and the Lord takes away, blessed be the Name of the Lord.

4. This Blessing God implies, a *fixed settled Reverence* for God in our *Minds*, and very high and glorious *Thoughts* of him *abiding upon our Hearts*. To bless God with our Lips, and to have slight or hard *Thoughts* of him in our *Minds*, will be far from coming up to what is intended by *Job* in our Text. Or to profess to honour the Name and Perfections of God in a *Place of Worship*, and to speak irreverently of him, and of his Providences at *other Times* and on other Occasions, this would be a grievous Inconsistency. Every serious, devout and reverend Thought of God that we seem to have, and would be thought to have, when on any solemn Occasion we are worshipping before him, should abide with us and be manifested at every proper Season, and in our whole Conversation afterward.

Thus I have gone through the several Branches of this Text which I proposed to enlarge on: And I wish to God every one in this Assembly might be taught to apply, and make such an Use of what has been said, as to own, and honour, and bless God more, in every Circumstance of Life.

1. What Reason have many of us this Day to *bless a giving God*. Think over all your Mercies and Enjoyments, your Gifts spiritual and temporal, your Family Comforts and Blessings, and all your personal Mercies and Acquisitions, and write upon all *THE LORD GAVE*. And none surely will be backward to bless a giving

ing God. If any should fail in this Part of their Duty, they have a great deal of Reason to fear God will take away his *Unvalued Blessings*.

2. Let those who are *bereav'd of any outward Comforts*, learn also to bless a *taking God*. He that gave has an undoubted Right to take, when and where he sees fit: His Wisdom is infinite and unerring, he will do nothing but what is fit to be done: And he will one Day satisfy us, that what he does, is better than what we *choose*, whenever he does those Things that *cross* our *Wishes and Desires*. And there is nothing happens to us which may not give Occasion, on one Account or another, to bless his Name. If any have lost, by the Managements of *Wicked Men*, what they had gained by former Care and Diligence, they would do well to observe that *Job* does not say God gave, and the *Chaldeans* or *Sabæans* have taken away; but he that gave has seen fit, in the Course of his Providence, to take away: And if they have a right Sense of Things, they will not hereupon grow prophane; but will humble themselves, and still bless the Name of the Lord. And those who have lost their *Children* and *Friends*, and such as may have been the very Hope of their Families, yet should sit down and seriously consider, *God gave before he took*; and instead of finding Fault, they will then see Reason to bless his Name.

You especially who are this Day mourning on Account of a very *hopeful and desirable Youth*, whom it has pleased God to take away from you by Death; you should think of the great Goodness and Mercy of God in giving you such a Son, and giving him such early and prevail-
ing

ing Inclinations to what was Good, that you have abundance of Reason to hope he is taken away in *Mercy to himself*; however *afflictive* such a Stroke may be to you. You should bless the Name of that God, who made you the Parents of a *Child that feared him*, and was *dutiful to you*, and had a Concern for the *Honour of Religion*, even at an *Age* that few begin so much as to think of it. And when you are speaking to your Friends and Acquaintance of the Love that he had to the *Worship of God*; and his Aversion to *Swearing*, and *Curfing*, and *prophane Language*; and of his good Disposition to *keep holy the Sabbath Day*; and of his Care to pray to his *Father in secret*, and by himself; and of his wonderful *Love of Truth*, and Dislike of all false and *deceitful Tricks*, or *lying Words*, and of his having no *fond Desire* of any Thing that might be generally minded by those of *his Age in the World*, but showing a great Regard to the *Law of God*, and to the *Gospel Grace and Institutions*; when (I say) you are speaking of these Things, (as I have heard you mention several Instances of his Piety in these Respects) surely you will *bless God*, that gave you *such a Child*, and that has now removed him from a *World of Sin and Misery*, to a World which *his Spirit* seem'd much more *suit'd to and fitted for*. And remember that though he shall not return to you, you shall go to him: And may your meeting at the last Day be joyful to all of you.

If any good Thing has dropt from him, that may at any Time have affected you, let not your *young Monitor* be *forgotten*, though he is *removed*: And whatever Share of your Thoughts and Affections he had, let *so much of your Hearts and Thoughts* go with him out of this World into

another, and endeavour to get more above both the Cares of Life, and the Fears of Death. I wish this Providence may be so useful to you, that you may have a *Name, better than that of Sons and Daughters*: And if God should spare *that Branch of your Family that is left to you*, this will be the Way to have such an one become the more comfortable: And you, and those which God has given you, will at last be made Partakers of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light.

And now you will give me Leave, having so fair an Occasion, to close this Discourse, by putting those that are *Young* upon *remembering their Creator in the Days of their Youth*. Here's one, at the Age of about Fifteen Years, called out of this World; and will not you that are young consider this, that Death may take you away, as well as those that are older? God has written his Laws upon your Hearts, and some of you are brought up in the Knowledge of the Scriptures, even from your infant Years; and the Temptations of the World, and the Corruptions of the Flesh, have not yet defaced and spoiled the Impressions for God and Religion, that are made upon your Minds: Oh, that you would now set yourselves to follow after that which is Good, and to improve in the Fear of God, and to go to CHRIST, who *loves young Disciples*, and who blessed little *Children*, and said, suffer them to come unto me and forbid them not, for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven.

Let the Example of him, whose Death I have been speaking of, be set before you in such Things as those I have mentioned. Don't keep away from the Worship of God: And don't be idle, and vain, and trifling when you are in it. You should also learn to *pray in secret*, and should never go to Sleep without first putting

ting up your Prayers to God. You should be careful not to learn any *ill Words*, but rather, to *reprove* those that curse and swear, and are prophane, as the Youth that is gone was known to do. You should detest the Profanation of the Lord's Day, and remember to keep that holy, as ever you expect God should bless you on other Days, or that he should take you to his everlasting Rest above. You should be very dutiful to your Parents, and Superiors; and be sure to love Truth, and to avoid all Lying and Deceit. And you should not be tempted from these Things by the Looseness, and Wickedness, and Vanity of other young Creatures that you see have no Sense of that which is good; but rather affect, and be ambitious of a *Singularity*, in that which is commanded by God.

If this Discourse may but gain the Heart of *one young Person* for God, there will be *Joy in Heaven* this Day; and I would hope, that such may become very *useful on Earth* too. I know, indeed, there have been several, who have seemed very serious in their younger Days, and yet have afterwards *cast off Religion* and the Fear of God, as if these had been amongst their childish Things. From being the Children of *Men*, they have commenced *Children of the Devil*, and have been unmindful of the God that made them, and brought them up. But, generally speaking, *young Converts* become the most knowing and *eminent Christians*. They have the most Time, and best Advantages, for Improvement. And we should endeavour to give those continual and growing Evidences of the Power of Religion in the first Impressions it made on our Hearts, that we may be pronounced by him, who knows what is in us and what is profess'd by

4

us,

us, to be *Israelites indeed, in whom there is no guile.*—

Let not the Young despise, and forget what is now said. May not I say, that one of your own Age and Company hath died, the more affectingly to teach you these Things?

Let not Parents be unmindful, to talk over Things of this Nature with their Children.

And let not any of you live and act, so, as that *even Children* should rise up against you, and condemn you for your Ignorance, Impiety, or Infidelity, at a Judgment Day.

Now to the great Sovereign of Life and Death, be Glory and Dominion for ever, AMEN.



F I N I S.

E R R A T A.

Page 5. Line 9. read, *while Men do not know*

Page 9. Line 1. read, *in his own Time.*

B O O K S Printed for R. H E T T
at the Bible and Crown in the
Poultry.

I. **A** Treatise of *that being born again without* which no Man can be *saved*. To which is added, a Discourse on the *Duty and Advantage of Singular Piety*. And some Extracts from a *late Writer*, suited to the Design of this Treatise. The Fourteenth Edition.

II. The *Lordship* of CHRIST considered, as it extends both to the Dead and Living; and as acquired by his *dying, rising again, and reviving*. In two Sermons preached at the *Merchant's-Lecture at Salter's-Hall, July 28, and August 11, 1724*. The Second Edition.

III. The Change of *Times and Seasons* consider'd and improv'd, both as referring to private Life, and to the Kingdoms of this World. A Sermon preach'd at *Salter's-Hall, Oct. 20, 1724*.

IV. A Treatise on the *Religious Observation* of the LORD'S-DAY, according to the exprefs Words of the *Fourth Commandment*. The Third Edition.

V. A Treatise on the *Deceitfulness of Sin*, and its leading Men to *Hardness of Heart*; with the Means appointed to prevent both its hardening and deceiving. The Fourth Edition.

VI. The *General Mourning* religiously improved. In a Sermon on the Death of King GEORGE I.

VII. Some Thoughts on the *KINGS* of this *Earth*, bringing their Glory into the *heavenly City*. A Sermon preached at *Salter's-Hall, Oct. 31, 1727*.

VIII. The *Great Concern* of Human Life: Or a summary Account of the *Fear of God*, and *keeping his Commandments*. The Third Edition. To which is now added, *Human Virtues*: Or a Collection of
the

BOOKS Printed for R. HETT.

the *Rules of Scripture*, that teach Men to live *soberly*, and to be happy in *themselves*. With *Three Discourses* on SELF POSSESSION, as it is the Happiness only of a *True Christian*.

IX. A Sermon occasioned by the Death of the late Reverend Mr. THOMAS COTTON, M. A. Preached at *Hampstead*, July 26, 1730. To which is added, a *Discourse* at the *Grave*.

X. *Justice* in all its Branches: Or a Collection of the *Rules of Scripture*, that teach Men to *do justly*. Which includes also the Rules for *Reparation of Injuries*, with the Nature and Necessity of *Restitution*.

XI. *Charity* in all its Branches: Or a Collection of the *Rules of Scripture* that teach Men to *love Mercy*, &c.

XII. *Knowledge* and *Charity* considered, *separately* and *united*; in a Sermon preached at *Nottingham*, July 16, 1732.

XIII. A Sermon on MARRIAGE, preached at *Black-Fryers*, on occasion of the Marriage of the *Princess Royal* with the *Prince of Orange*.

XIV. A Sermon preached at the NEW MEETING HOUSE in *Carter-Lane*, on the first Day of OPENING it for Religious Worship, Dec. 5, 1734.

XV. SCRIPTURE and TRADITION considered: In a SERMON on *Ephes. ii. 20*, preached at *Salter's-Hall*, Febr. 6, 1734. The Second Edition.



s
e
n
f
n
e
at
ne
G
-
I
s
-
M
b
n
d
m
t
a
i